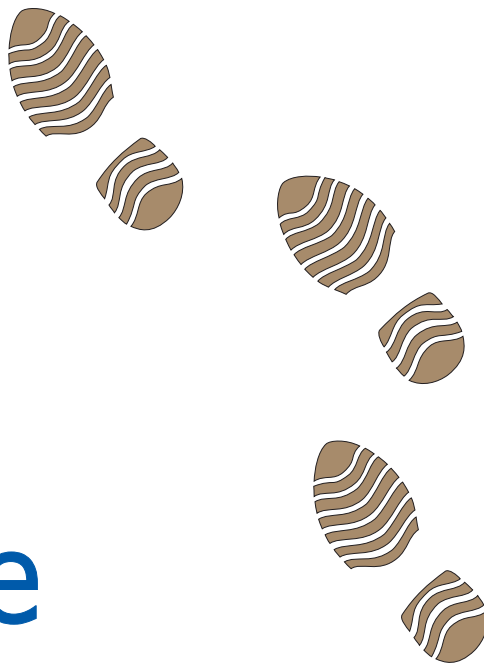


# Walk In Our Shoes

Event Organization Manual

EMS  
Fire  
Police  
Nursing



## ***Objectives:***

1. To reduce the injuries, deaths and economic losses resulting from motor vehicle crashes.
2. To raise the public's awareness on the health and economic benefits of air bags, safety restraints, and child safety seats.
3. To support the "Buckle Up America" campaign and increase the national seat belt use to 85% by 2000 and 90% by 2005; reduce child occupant fatalities (0-4 years) by 15% in 2000 and by 25% in 2005 (from 685 in 1995).
4. To encourage collaboration between the medical and enforcement communities to promote traffic safety.
5. To encourage all nurses, regardless of specialty, to take a more active role in traffic safety and motor vehicle injury



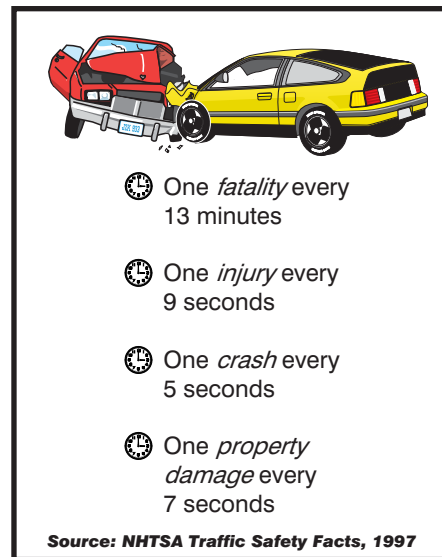
## ***Program Description:***

### ***Introduction***

Motor vehicle travel is the primary means of transportation in the United States, providing an unprecedented degree of mobility. Motor vehicles, through the research done by safety engineers like Hugh DeHaven, have become crash worthy, equipped with safety devices such as belt restraint system and air bags, and “friendly interior” including padded steering wheel, padded dashboard and touch pad control dashboard. Yet for all these advantages, deaths and injuries resulting from motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for persons of every age from 6 to 27 years old (based on 1993 data). In 1996, 41,907 lives were lost and 3,511,000 people were injured in motor vehicle traffic crashes, while 4,548,000 crashes involved property damage only.

In 1997, the fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel remained at a historic low of 1.6, since 1993. (Compare this rate with the fatality rate of 2.5 in 1986.) A 69 percent safety belt use rate nationwide and a reduction in the rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes to 38.6 percent, have made significant contributions to maintaining this consistently low fatality rate. However, much remains to be done. The economic cost of motor vehicle crashes in 1994 was more than 150.5 billion.

Statistics show that every hour someone in America dies simply because they did not buckle up. Many children are not restrained properly because the adults are not restrained themselves. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration’s most recent National Occupant Protection Use Survey, when the driver is ***buckled***, restraint use for toddlers (ages 1-4) is 86 percent. However, when the driver is ***unbuckled***, restraint use for toddlers drops dramatically to 23 percent.



Children under 12 are safest riding in the back seat. The impact of a deploying air bag on an unbelted child or a child sitting too close to the air bag is enough to injure or kill them. To date 49 children have died in air bag-related crashes. All of these children were not restrained, or were improperly restrained.

We can and must reduce the injuries, deaths and economic costs which result from motor vehicle collisions that occur in our communities. To accomplish this goal, the ***Walk In Our Shoes*** program was developed by the injury prevention and medical outreach specialists at the NHTSA Region V office.



***Walk In Our Shoes*** is one way we can act to prevent the needless injuries, deaths, and economic losses resulting from motor vehicle crashes.

Dr. Ricardo Martinez, NHTSA Administrator, pointed out the solution to the problem quite well when he said, “Safety belt use is the key to maximizing the benefits of air bags and to preventing thousands of lives that crashes claim each year.”



***.... ON OUR NATIONS ROADWAYS.***

## ***What is Walk In Our Shoes?***

***Walk In Our Shoes*** is an educational program conducted by the medical and enforcement professionals for the general public. It is an event that can be held in any community. A ***Walk In Our Shoes*** event involves nurses, police, EMS and firefighters, professionals that share a common goal of preventing injuries and saving lives. The ***Walk In Our Shoes*** program gives medical and public safety professionals an opportunity to benefit their communities by:

- providing public education on traffic safety in general,
- encouraging the correct use of child safety seats and safety belts,
- promoting goodwill and visibility for organizations, and at the same time showcase their life saving efforts in the community.



A ***Walk In Our Shoes*** event offers the citizens an opportunity to benefit from the experiences of the nurses, police officers, paramedics, and firefighters in their communities. These professionals have seen senseless injuries and have cared for people whose lives were lost because of unsafe practices.

The ***Walk In Our Shoes*** program philosophy is very simple. If the citizens could just walk in these shoes of the professionals, for just one day, they would know how frustrating it is for the nurses, emergency medical personnel and law enforcement officers to see the needless toll of injuries and deaths from motor vehicle crashes.



## *How does the program work?*



***Walk In Our Shoes*** involves the representatives from the various medical, police and public safety organizations in a community, spending a few hours together distributing traffic safety materials to motorists on topics such as safety belts, air bags, child safety seats, pedestrian and

Motorists are contacted while stopped at a traffic light. Experience has shown that this program can be safely conducted even at one of the busiest street intersections of a community. Restrained motorists receive compliments, and those that are not are strongly encouraged to buckle up. Citations for not using safety belts are usually not issued during the event by the police officers, but the motoring public are told that buckling up is a law and the law will be enforced the next time they are stopped.

The local print and broadcast media should be notified in advance to alert them to scheduled event. Then press releases should be issued the day before the event to announce to the media the important purpose of the event, and the wide community based participation.



Special instructions are given to vehicles where children are found unrestrained or improperly restrained. A child safety seat check can also be offered if trained personnel are available.

If appropriate, loaner seats from the police department or another source can also be made available for distribution at this event.



### ***Program Evaluation***

An observational survey of safety belt use conducted both before and after the ***Walk In Our Shoes*** event is encouraged. The surveys could be conducted by the law enforcement and will show if this event causes any change in driver behaviors.

### ***Who Can Participate In Walk In Our Shoes?***

Everyone can participate in the program. The program is not limited to emergency nurses. Any nurse, regardless of specialty can take the lead role. Emergency nurses are singled out because they are usually the ones that take a lead role in the project and they have a working relationship with the EMS and law enforcement community. State highway safety offices can promote the program in their states.



Organizing and conducting a ***Walk In Our Shoes*** event is a way of developing a relationship between nontraditional partners in highway safety, and fostering broad based community support for highway safety.

## ***Specific Roles***

### **Nurses:**

- Lead person of the program, the facilitator of the event.
- Contact other members of the team and arrange a meeting with the law enforcement officer, describe each participant's role in the event, and select a site, date and time to conduct the program.
- Work with the media. The law enforcement department may have a media person they work with and a media relations officer.
- Prepare materials to be distributed at the event.
- Have a nurse available at the event who is trained to conduct child safety seat checks.
- Wear a white uniform (if possible) or your agency uniform.



### **Law Enforcement:**

- Co-facilitator of the event
- Work with the Police Chief and other officers who will staff the event.
- Select suitable site (busy intersection, mall, etc.)
- Provide adequate number of law enforcement officers to staff the event.
- Provide for an additional area at the site to conduct child safety seat checks.
- Have a police officer available who is trained to conduct child safety seat checks.





## **EMS/Firefighters:**

- Provide adequate personnel to staff the event.
- Wear uniform.
- Work with local businesses to provide free gifts to children (for example: coupons for free ice cream cones from ice cream or items from fast food shops, or ticket coupons from amusement parks, etc.).



## ***Materials Needed:***

1. ***“Walk In Our Shoes”*** signs (4 optional).
2. Traffic safety materials covering Air bag safety, Seat belts, Bicycle safety, Pedestrian safety (500 pieces each).
3. Orange safety vests to be worn by participants.
4. Free and/or loaner child safety seats if local police department has a child safety seat loaner program.
5. Sample press release.
6. Vince & Larry costume - if available.
7. Police vehicles.
8. Emergency vehicles, ambulance and fire engine(s).
9. Bottled water/fruit juices for event workers.

## ***Materials provided by NHTSA Region V Office;***

1. “How-to” manual.
2. Copy ready traffic safety materials..
3. Camera-ready ***“Walk In Our Shoes”*** logo.
4. Sample Press Release.

## ***Schedule of Events: Checklist:***

### **1 -2 months prior to event:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Event committee meeting to plan event.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Select a suitable site for the event, a busy intersection with a site nearby for the safety seat check, if needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain free car seats and/or loaner car seats.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm availability of trained child safety seat checker.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Confirm availability of emergency vehicles to be placed at opposite ends of the site in the middle of the street (preferably on an island), and on the cross street. During the event, these vehicles may elect to operate their emergency lights.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reproduce and prepare materials to be distributed at the event. You may want to enlist the help of high school students who are seeking community service hours to help with the preparation of the packets.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Obtain donation of bottled water or juices from local businesses.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Work with Media person of the sponsor hospital or police department to obtain media coverage of the event

**One week before the event:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Meet with all participants.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make sure all materials for distribution are on hand and ready for distribution.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Re-contact the media with a media advisory on the event.

**One day before the event:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Issue press release
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take a deep breath and relax.

**Day of event:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrive at least ½ hour early before the scheduled event.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Have the police officers and Fire Department position their vehicles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ If you are offering free safety seat checks, make sure the free and /or loaner seats are on hand.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Provide water/juice for the event participants (donated by local businesses).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Smile and have a nice time during the event.

**Immediately post-event:**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Debriefing after the event to discuss possible repeat of event.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Evaluation of event. Encourage participants comments.

**Congratulations.  
Great Job.**

*Safety is everyone's responsibility.  
Stop the roadway epidemic.*



The development and production team for this project included Kathy Koch, Thelma Kuska, and Curtis Murff of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Region V Office. Photographs used in this manual were taken at the July 2, 1998, *Walk In Our Shoes* Event, held in Chicago, Illinois, at the Taste of Chicago Festival, on Monroe Street between Columbus and Lakeshore Drive.



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